

SECTION 2

Recruitment and Selection

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Recruitment and Selection Options

Background

The Department of Personnel convened a Recruitment and Selection Concept Design Team to design recruitment and selection concepts and options for consideration for the state's new human resource system. The team membership, listed in Appendix 1, represented a wide variety of interests and organizations including higher education institutions, state agencies, and labor. The team worked from early November 2002 to March 2003.

The team reviewed needs, strategies, and potential rule concepts and options for the process of recruitment, assessment, selection, and hiring. In conducting this review, the team analyzed trends and developments, best practice research, needs of managers and employees, DOP customer survey data, the experience of other states that have implemented civil service reform, and current day needs of the state as an employer.

Using the overall guidance of the general HR 2005 design criteria listed on page 2 of this report, the team developed possible approaches and options for most aspects of the state's employee recruitment and selection policy and function, and recommended:

- An overall framework for recruitment and selection in state government
- Long and short term strategies and tools
- New rule concepts in light of the civil service reform legislation, including alternatives to the statutory elimination of the "rule of 7"
- Alternatives for appointment, probationary, and trial service rules and processes needed to support classification and compensation changes and other system changes that would improve human resource management practices

The team provided their recommendations to the Director of Personnel. After careful review and analysis, the DOP senior management team determined which of the recruitment and selection options (or modifications thereof) were viable and should be presented for feedback to a broader audience. These are outlined in the remainder of this section.

Trends and Developments

The first step in building an exceptional workforce is finding and selecting talented, motivated people. Recruitment and selection establishes the foundation for staffing state government organizations and is a key part of any human resource program. The recruitment and selection process for the state must reflect good business practices directed at achieving high quality service at the lowest cost.

Competition for scarce human resource capital continues to be fierce. While a declining economy is having some impact on the availability of applicants in some geographic and professional areas, there are others in which the qualifications and capacities of available talent may not fit well. The number of professional level positions in the state's workforce is increasing. The growth of jobs requiring advanced levels of knowledge is outpacing the growth of candidates with commensurate qualifications. While as of December 2002, the national unemployment rate was at 6%, the unemployment rate of college graduates was less than half that at 2.9%.¹

The workforce is aging as baby boomers reach maturity. With more than 50% of state employees at age 45 or older, the state is experiencing higher turnover due to retirement. According to the Washington State Department of Personnel Workforce Planning Guide by the year 2005, up to 27% of PERS 1 employees will be retirement-eligible. Folding in PERS 2, up to 38% of employees will be eligible. This will result in a significant loss in workforce skill and knowledge, with certain occupational areas hit harder than others. Recruitment and selection practices need to be prepared to address the loss of talent and historical knowledge resulting from significant retirement activity.

Employers are increasingly applying electronic technology to find and place employees. To remain competitive, the state must continue to expand its use of this technology.

State wages continue to lag behind the private sector. Traditional attractions to public service, such as job stability and generous benefits, no longer exist in an era of downsizing and rapid change. The state recruitment process needs to incorporate and market other positive elements of public service in order to attract and retain qualified employees.

Today's work environment is fast paced. The electronic information age continues to generate change at a dazzling rate. Whereas in 1900 the total amount of knowledge of human kind doubled every hundred years, it now doubles in less than five years. Strategic planning has moved from a several year cycle to six to twelve months. State government needs processes to continuously increase the capacity of its workforce to respond to rapid change.

Increasingly work is done by interdisciplinary teams and on a project basis. There is an increasing need for a "plug and play" workforce that uses permanent, nonpermanent, and contracted staff resources in a constant and ever-changing mix.

The employment contract is changing with new generations coming into the workforce that have different expectations about their work and their work environment. While baby boomers represent 50% of today's workforce, younger generations are quickly becoming a major segment and represent about 1/3 of today's workforce.

The composition of the available workforce is continuing to become more diverse. Women and ethnic minorities continue to grow as a component of the workforce. In

¹ "Workforce Trends", December 2002

January 2003, the composition of the Washington State general government workforce was 5% African American, 2.1% Native American, 5.8 % Asian, and 82.7% Caucasian. While the general government workforce overall increased by 6.9% between January 1999 and January 2003, the growth of people of color in the same period was 11.3%.²

Recruitment and selection processes must be adaptable to diverse expectations and cultures of today's workforce. Diversity is not only good public policy, it is good business practice. It ensures that we draw upon the talents of the entire workforce. Our recruitment and selection processes will need to effectively penetrate the labor market and eliminate barriers to hiring women, minorities, and people of disability.

The only thing for certain about the future is that it will be different from today. The process and rules that relate to recruitment and selection must be adaptable to changing needs and circumstances.

Customer Research

The Department of Personnel reported the following customer research findings about state manager and employee concerns and preferences regarding recruitment and selection.³

With regard to recruitment and selection, the overriding theme among managers and employees was the need to efficiently hire and promote the best qualified, best performing candidates, with fair treatment. Most managers and employees felt that persons should be able to apply for any job at any time, that the use of desirable qualifications was preferable over required qualifications, and that agencies should have the flexibility to screen and refer candidates on the basis of position-specific skill needs.

Limiting referral of job candidates to those with the top seven scores on the register – the “rule of 7” – has been a statutory requirement up until passage of the civil service reform bill. The present research found that a strong majority, approximately 84% of managers and 78% of employees, feel that the rule of 7 should be replaced with the ability to refer all qualified candidates.

Survey results also found that 73% of employees generally felt that promotional preference should be set aside to allow consideration of the best qualified. Many commented that promotional consideration is important, but it should not be absolute.

In general, those employees in favor of retaining the rule of 7 and absolute promotional preference expressed concern with fair treatment and that doing away with these restrictions would allow managers to hire “whoever they want”.

² DOP- Workforce Diversity Activities – March 2003

³ DOP's complete report on civil service reform customer research is available at <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/hrreform/customer-research.doc>.

Best Practices

The 2000/2001 International Personnel Managers Association - National Association of State Personnel Executives Human Resources Benchmarking Project identified four key recruitment and selection trends in the public sector:

- Making the hiring process more timely
- Making recruitment more proactive/aggressive
- Tracking and monitoring recruitment methods
- Decentralization

Governing Magazine grades all states on a regular basis on their performance related to several management practices, including human resource management. Two elements considered in this evaluation tie directly to recruitment and selection. These elements and the criteria applied in the evaluation are:

- Conducting strategic analysis of present and future human resource needs - the extent to which a government is aware of and addresses its personnel capacity over time, particularly the sophistication with which the government conducts strategic analysis of present and future human resource needs and availability.
- Obtaining a skilled workforce - the extent to which the government is able to obtain the employees it needs. To accomplish this, a government must be able to conduct effective recruiting efforts and to hire appropriately skilled and qualified employees in a timely manner.

Recruitment and Selection – Barriers and Opportunities

Barriers:

The following existing rules and processes were identified as creating potential barriers to an effective recruitment and selection program:

- Required qualifications, as they may preclude consideration of capable candidates
- Mandatory posting requirements, resulting in time delay
- Traditional testing, resulting in time delay and having questionable validity
- Rule of seven, resulting in elimination of potential candidates for consideration
- Rule of one for RIF referrals which limits available candidates for consideration
- Ranked registers and ranking by score within registers which limits candidates for consideration
- Promotional preference, which may limit candidates for consideration

In addition, the team determined that reliance on regimented, rule-driven processes has resulted in a lack of knowledge among human resource staff and program managers related to recruitment and selection practices and techniques.

Opportunities:

The following were identified as opportunities for improving the recruitment and selection process:

- Open continuous recruitment
- Active outreach to passive job seekers
- Use of desirable qualifications
- Job-specific candidate screening criteria based on job analysis
- Expansion of position description to incorporate essential knowledge, skills, abilities; competencies; essential functions; specific position requirements; and job environment conditions
- Electronic application, candidate pool, and certification processes
- Adoption of an employee referral incentive program
- Open candidate pool versus ranked registers and referrals
- Ability to funnel a candidate pool based on position-specific criteria
- Increased role of DOP as an information and education conduit on recruitment and selection tools and practices
- Use of recruitment data for strategic planning and effectiveness assessment

Basic Framework

There is a multitude of factors that relate to job success, and positions often have unique skill requirements and working environments. Regimented screening processes like required qualifications, testing, and ranked registers, should be replaced with multiple screening tools and flexibility to tailor the hiring process to the individual situation. This reflects a major shift from a “one size fits all” to a “one size fits one” strategy.

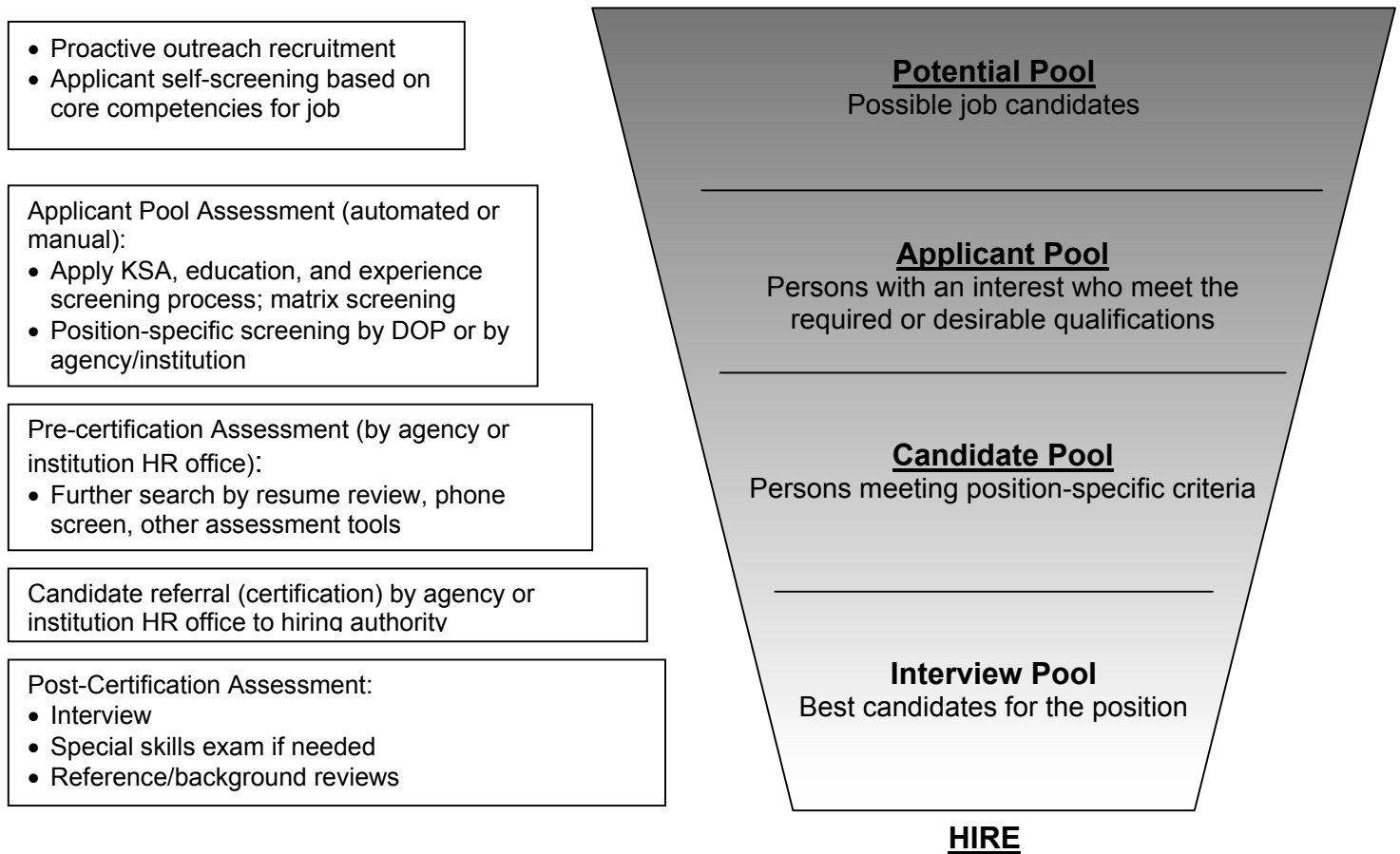
The following key changes to the recruitment and selection system were recommended by the Recruitment & Selection Concept Design Team:

- To improve timeliness, provide open, flexible recruitment in which application and recruitment can occur at any time and whenever practical, on an ongoing basis.
- To improve inclusiveness, create desirable versus required minimum qualifications (except for legal or licensure requirements).
- To improve timeliness, eliminate traditional time-consuming testing methodologies such as multiple-choice tests. Instead, screening processes would be agency-driven based on position-specific needs.
- To improve flexibility and facilitate hiring the best candidate for the position, create one open, unranked candidate pool for job classes *in most cases*. This would replace ranked registers and ranking by score on the registers. Agencies would have the option to give preference to promotional candidates.
- To improve flexibility and facilitate hiring the best candidate for the position, referral of candidates would be open and not restricted in number. The determination of which names go forward for consideration by the hiring authority would be based on job-related screening criteria applied by the individual hiring organization. Electronic technologies would facilitate this kind of individualized screening.
- To ensure job fit, provide time for coaching and training and give employees a longer period to develop and demonstrate capacity.
- To ensure hiring based on merit for the position, provide extensive resources and training for supervisors and human resource staff on the application and use of job-based screening methodologies and interviews. Accountability for fair and high quality hiring practices should be incorporated in management evaluations.

Within this framework, rules would be minimal to provide employers flexible tools to successfully meet their individual position needs. Aspects of recruitment and selection are subject to collective bargaining and, therefore, some rules would be superseded by bargaining agreements for employees who are in bargaining units.

The recruitment and selection process should be viewed as a funnel that starts out broad and inclusive and, through a series of events, narrows available candidates down to the few who are most appropriate for the position. This narrowing process should be

based on a number of job-related factors and requirements that relate to an individual position and circumstance. Since there is significant competition for skilled human resources, the funneling process must be agile and flow quickly. The graphic below illustrates this funneling concept.



Funneling through this process may start out centralized, using the Department of Personnel, and work down to the higher education institution or state agency, or it may be entirely decentralized and conducted by the institution or agency. Flexibility would exist to use the funnel in a manner that provides the greatest effectiveness and efficiency for the situation.

Appendix 2 offers two examples that help define the “pools” depicted above. Also, two examples of flow charts reflecting the process through DOP and through a decentralized process are represented by Appendices 3 and 4.

Recruitment & Selection Options and Recommendations

The options deemed viable by DOP based on the Recruitment and Selection Concept Design Team's recommendations for each key recruitment and selection function are detailed herein. These options are organized by function as follows:

1. [Job Analysis](#)
2. [Candidate Sourcing and Recruitment](#)
3. [Candidate Qualification Requirements](#)
4. [Application Format](#)
5. [Initial Assessment](#)
6. [Applicant Pool](#)
7. [Position-Based Candidate Assessment](#)
8. [Candidate Referral \(Certification\)](#)
9. [Interviews and Post-certification Assessment](#)
10. [Reference, Background, and Other Checks](#)
11. [Hire and Appointment; Separation and Reversion](#)
12. [Non-permanent Appointments](#)
13. [Seasonal Employment](#)
14. [Cyclic Employment](#)
15. [Project and Special Employment Programs](#)
16. [Pre-employment Testing](#)
17. [Orientation](#)
18. [Development Programs](#)
19. [Recruitment and Selection Management Practices](#)

Within each of these functional areas is a description of the issue and the recommended options.

1. Job Analysis

Job analysis in recruitment and selection is the process of assessing the job-related needs of a position. It is a good starting point for the process and can be used to identify:

- The position purpose or the reason 'why' the position exists
- Job duties and responsibilities
- Key knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) or key competencies for the position
- Essential functions required by the position
- Job standards and expectations
- Job factors (environmental, location, team environment, physical requirements, etc.)

This information can be used to establish recruitment and selection criteria specific to the needs of the position, such as:

- Required or desirable requirements (education and/or experience) for screening applicants
- Professional license, registration, and/or certification requirements
- Assessment tools and interview questions for applicant funneling based on knowledge, skills, and abilities; essential functions; job standards and expectations; and environmental factors
- Selection instruments (e.g., resume screening, screening questions, job simulations)
- Orientation needs for new hires

The job analysis paves the way for making hiring decisions using fair and objective job based criteria.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that a new position description format be developed that incorporates key competencies, essential functions, and job environment information. If possible, the form should be automated and stored electronically to allow easy access by employees, their supervisors, and human resource staff, and updated as appropriate by the supervisor and/or employee. The description should be updated with major changes in duties to keep the description up to date.

There should be a rule that each position be described on a position description form developed by DOP.

To avoid confusion as to where the authority to assign duties lies, it is recommended that the instructions be clear that this authority rests with management; however, the description should be completed jointly by the employee and manager.

2. Candidate Sourcing and Recruitment

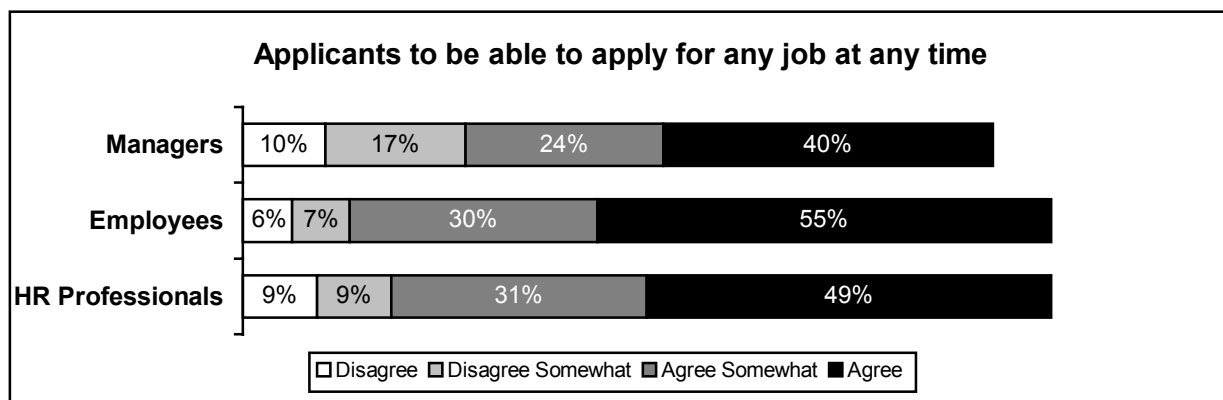
Candidate sourcing is the process of identifying prospective candidates. This could come from an Internet search, newspaper ad, job board, employees, contacting known high performers in the field of endeavor, etc. It is an active process. Recruitment is the process of soliciting candidates to apply for positions.

The state has a need to attract qualified, motivated, diverse candidates for positions. This is best served by using a broad array of flexible options to meet needs. There should be multiple options for candidate sourcing (employment bulletins, advertising, college recruitment, job fairs, targeted outreach, executive search, etc.). Depending on the circumstance, recruitment may be done on a centralized or decentralized basis, may

target active seekers and/or passive job candidates, and may use differing processes to make contact with prospective candidates.

The use of the Internet and electronic technologies has become a prevalent practice. Washington's recognition as the "Digital State" reflects the leadership that is already being realized in this area. Continued growth and development of processes such as Inet App are a must. Inet App is the Internet application process administered by DOP, which is used in general government (state agencies) that allows candidates to apply and be assessed online. Inet App allows applicants to apply, undergo initial assessment, and be ready for consideration of appointment in a matter of hours.

As reflected through the DOP customer survey, there is a strong desire among employees, echoed by managers and HR professionals, that applicants should be able to apply for jobs at any time. This practice would allow current state employees and other applicants to enter competition for positions as their experience, education, knowledge, skills, and abilities develop. Constantly updating available candidates for consideration benefits the employing organization as they have access to "fresh" or "real time" applicant pools. Whenever practical, maintaining open, ongoing recruitment is recommended. The chart below reflects responses to this issue.



Information should be made available to candidates on recruitment announcements and through on-line processes such as Inet App that provide information such as the number of positions in a class, location of positions, number of applicants in the applicant pool, and number of anticipated openings. This data will help give applicants a picture of likely activity related to hiring.

Further information should be made available in recruitment materials, such as the inclusion of KSA's or competencies, job environment information, and key job expectations to help potential applicants screen themselves against the job requirements and environment.

A best practice that is not actively used by the state now is the use of an employee referral incentive program to generate referrals of potential candidates from current employees. This kind of program has proven to be cost-effective for other private and

public employers. Since current employees often have profound knowledge about both the candidates they refer and the position to be filled, such referrals also have proven successful in placing well-qualified candidates. For instance, at 18,000-employee TRW Systems and Information Group, the employee referral program is the single largest recruiting tool, accounting for 35% to 40% of all new hires⁴. Such a program should be considered in the future.

Recommendations:

DOP should serve as a resource center for centralized technology, expert assistance and consultation, and linkage with available resources. Individual state organizations should have flexibility on when and how to tap into DOP resources.

Wherever practical, allow persons to apply for any job at any time.

3. Candidate Qualification Requirements

Qualifications are a funneling tool for screening candidates. Qualifications may be established for positions as required or as desirable.

Currently, for most classifications in Washington's general classified service, required minimum qualifications are used. These qualifications establish fixed requirements on a generic basis for a classification that all candidates must meet to be eligible for consideration.

An illustration of the difference between minimum qualifications is reflected in the classification movement in general government from Personnel Officer to Human Resource Consultant. The class series moved from minimum qualifications to desirable qualifications.

For instance, the Personnel Officer 3's minimum qualifications were:

A Bachelor's degree involving major study in business or public administration, social sciences, or allied field; and three years of professional experience in personnel administration or technical personnel work. Additional qualifying experience may be substituted, year for year, for education.

All candidates to be considered would have needed to meet these qualifications. An individual with a Bachelor's degree in philosophy, six years of progressively responsible professional human resource experience, currently a human resource manager supervising four staff for a small company, professional certification, and having two articles published in a professional HR journal, would not qualify for consideration. An individual with a 9th grade education and seven years as a paraprofessional personnel technician doing the same job would qualify for consideration. Both potentials might be good candidates, but the minimum qualifications would preclude consideration of the first.

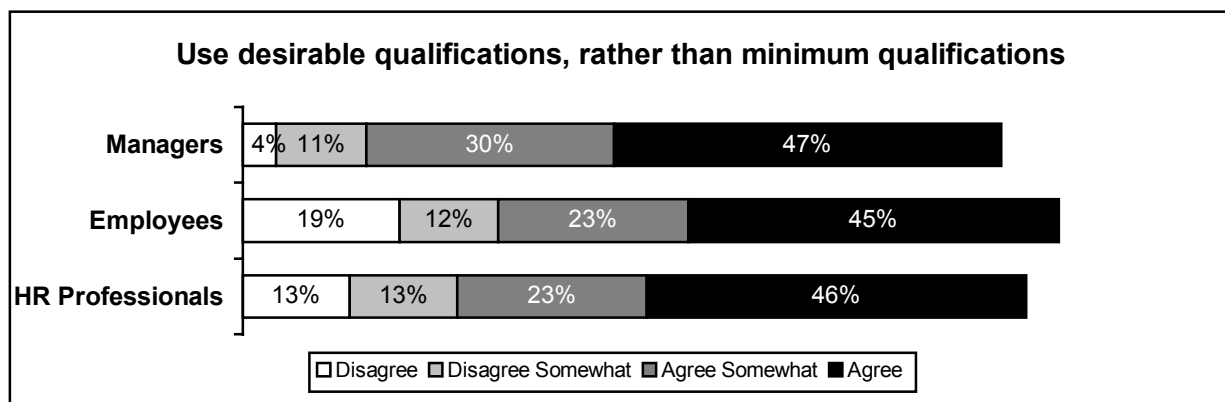
⁴ Winning Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Quality Employees, HR Bookmark

Desirable qualifications are characteristics that are usually beneficial to performance in a classification, but are not an absolute requirement for consideration. For instance, in general government, the desirable qualifications for the classification of Human Resource Consultant 3 are:

Demonstration of core competencies. A Bachelor's degree with focus on business, human resources, social or organizational behavioral sciences, or related field and two years of professional human resource experience including assessing and facilitating solutions for human resource problems and issues OR comparable education and/or experience. Specific technical knowledge or experience may be required based on position assignments.

Most successful candidates will likely have these qualifications, but they are not absolute. Candidates with other job relevant experience and talents could be considered. Also there may be specific positions that call for different and unique qualifications. Both of the potential candidates outlined earlier could be considered.

It is in the state's interest to maximize the number of viable candidates for positions. Required qualifications can represent an artificial barrier to the employment of a diverse workforce. Desirable qualifications can be adapted to meet position specific needs and identify more highly qualified candidates. This direction was supported by a majority of employees, managers, and HR professionals in DOP's customer survey, as shown in the following chart:



Recommendation:

Eliminate classification-based required qualifications except when such qualifications are required by law (i.e., license, certification, registration) or they serve a particular business need.

A rule does not appear necessary. The determination of qualifications used in applicant screening would be left with the hiring organization based on job specific needs.

4. Application Process and Form

The process used for application for positions should make it easy for applicants to apply. The form should also provide adequate information for screening and funneling of applicants.

Inet App currently includes recruits for over 110 classes and is being expanded. Inet App establishes an applicant profile that can be reused by the applicant in subsequent applications. This easy to use and convenient process results in candidates going from application, to scoring, to being placed on a register in a very short period of time. Applicant information is readily available and accessible to employer human resource staff and hiring authorities.

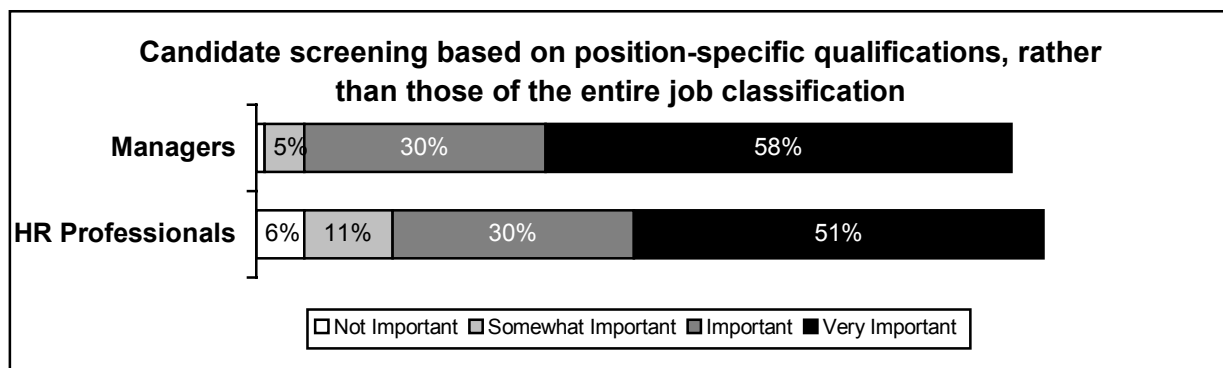
Recommendation:

Continue expansion of the Inet Application process for high volume recruitment, and extend to higher education institutions the option of using Inet App for recruiting. A rule does not appear necessary.

5. Initial Assessment

Initial assessment is the start of the funneling process of candidates and occurs prior to their inclusion in the applicant pool. Initial assessment may include such processes as verification of required qualifications, testing, education and training assessment, and candidate responses to skills and experience checklists. Current practice for general government is to use generic classification-based testing to rank candidates. Higher education currently uses a supplemental examination process to evaluate education, training, and experience to rank applicants.

Managers and HR professionals both strongly favor moving toward screening processes that are position-specific versus classification based. DOP customer survey results on this are reflected below.



Position-specific screening criteria particularly makes sense if the state moves to a broader, streamlined classification system.

Some have expressed concern about the volume of applicants who might be in the applicant pool for high volume classes and the potential challenge of narrowing these individuals down to a reasonable number for referral to the hiring authority. Tools exist to do this. As an alternative to meet this situation, testing could continue as a process to provide a ranking of applicants for positions in high volume classifications.

Recommendation:

In general, it is recommended that any initial candidate assessment should be simple and expeditious, so as to eliminate clearly unqualified candidates and to move qualified candidates forward into the applicant pool. To the degree possible, position-specific qualifications should be screened for, rather than those of an entire class. Further job-specific tools can be applied in the funneling process in subsequent steps of the recruitment and selection process. Because of inherent limitations and time consumption, it is recommended that testing be eliminated or, if conducted, done in a fast, straightforward process that divides candidates into broad-based bands (e.g., well qualified, qualified). A rule does not appear necessary.

6. Applicant Pool

An applicant pool is a grouping of qualified individuals available for consideration in the candidate pool and eventual appointment.

The current practice for state agencies includes the use of 12 tiered and ranked registers; higher education uses 10. Most of these tiered registers are ranked by test score (e.g., promotional, open competitive), or seniority (e.g., RIF, reversion), with a few that are unranked (e.g., transfer, re-employment). Candidates are usually referred from the highest tiered register on the basis of ranking following the traditional “rule of 7”.

To maximize opportunity for candidate consideration and evaluation of candidates against individual position criteria, the Recruitment and Selection Concept Design Team recommended that one unranked listing or broadly banded listing of candidates represent the applicant pool. To ensure the names in the pool are fresh, there should be a regular process to reaffirm applicant interest and availability and to purge the pool as appropriate.

Promotional preference and the number of names certified are mandatory subjects of collective bargaining. While DOP customer survey results appear to reflect that most employees do not favor promotional preference, several on the team felt this may reflect confusion with other preferential processes. There should, therefore, be a process to identify promotional candidates in the pool and for reflecting the ranking of applicants in the pool.

An interesting approach to promotional preference used in some jurisdictions is to tie such preference to specified performance criteria. For instance, it could be provided to employees with superior performance as documented in performance evaluations and not to others.

Recommendations:

A rule should define an applicant pool. There should be a rule allowing purging of the applicant pool based on candidate interest and availability. There also should be a process for removing applicants from the list for reasonable job-related reasons.

Generally, the applicant pool should be one unranked list. However, a mechanism should be in place to identify promotional candidates and give agencies/institutions the flexibility to determine whether and how to provide for promotional preference. Reduction-in-force re-hire lists would be treated differently as discussed later in Section 4 of this document.

7. Position-Based Candidate Assessment

Position-based candidate assessment represents the process of identifying qualified applicants for a specific position. Those identified represent a candidate pool.

Since the hiring agency would have the most profound knowledge about the job it is filling, including environmental factors and special needs, the determination of how funneling of the list of candidates is done should be at the discretion of the hiring agency. Both managers and human resource staff should have knowledge and access to a wide variety of assessment tools. DOP can be instrumental in making information and consultation about these resources readily available.

This may include the use of matrix codes (pre-defined education, experience, or other qualification criteria) or other screening methodology to identify candidates with particular experience, education or skill sets, resume sort, supplemental questionnaire to candidates, telephone screening, promotional preference, etc.

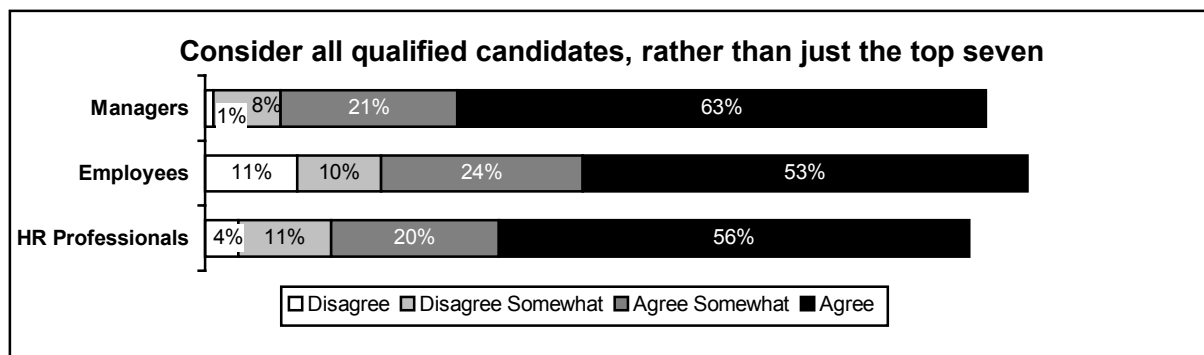
Recommendation:

Funneling of candidates from the applicant pool to the candidate pool should be done at the agency/institution level using job-specific screening criteria and methods. Any rule should allow for options in the process at the discretion of the hiring organization.

8. Certification (Referral)

The names provided to the hiring authority represent the certification of names to be considered for appointment and constitute the interview pool. Certifications are often commonly called referrals.

Currently, in general government and higher education, there is a rule of 7 governing certifications. However, this restriction has been removed under the new civil service law. An overwhelming majority of managers, employees, and human resource professionals who responded to DOP's customer survey favored consideration of all qualified candidates rather than just the top seven as reflected by the chart below.



In the past, certification of names has been centralized at DOP for most state agency job classes. The Recruitment and Selection Concept Design Team recommended that the certification process should occur at the level of the agency/institution human resource office. This decentralization places the activity at a level where the greatest knowledge will exist about the position, its required KSA's, and working environment. Higher education institutions and general government agencies with local list classifications have some existing experience in providing certifications at this level.

Depending on the number of names identified through position based candidate assessment, it may be appropriate to further funnel down the candidates to be actively considered in the interview pool. This would be to provide a manageable number for consideration or, if required in the case of employer policy or a collective bargaining agreement provision, to provide a specific number of candidates for certification or to provide promotional preference in the certification.

Promotional Preference

There are clearly different viewpoints on the subject of promotional preference. Most of the team felt that promotional preference unduly limits the candidate pool and impedes the ability to hire the best-qualified candidate, which would be a disservice to the taxpayers and government effectiveness. On the other hand, some felt that the absence of promotional preference would stifle the developmental opportunities of current employees and undermine the ability to maintain a stable workforce that is responsive to the public.

Veterans Preference and Affirmative Action

Veterans preference and affirmative action considerations also may be necessary to factor into the certification process. Veterans preference is required by law.

Reduction-In-Force (Layoff)

The status of employees who have been subject to reduction-in-force (RIF) or layoff in the certification process merits special consideration. Current general government and higher education provisions establish a RIF register (re-hire list) that is referred

before others with a rule of one based on seniority. In general, it is in the best interest of employees subject to layoff and the state to have an ongoing, active and flexible process to help facilitate the employee's return to state service or previous position level without forcing the employee or the hiring agency into a poor fit that dooms the employee to failure. RIF re-hire options are discussed further in Section 4 of this document.

Recommendation:

Certification (referral) should be defined by rule and should occur at the agency/institution level. Employers should have the option of a referral reflecting promotional candidates and/or providing a limited number of candidates to meet hiring needs.

9. Interviews and Post-Certification Assessment

Candidate interviews are a key part of the funneling process of post-certification assessment. Interviews as a selection procedure are designed to predict future job performance on the basis of an applicant's oral responses to inquiries. Some sort of an interview process occurs with virtually all hires. Interviews can be integrated with complimentary screening processes such as pre-exposed questions and performance exercises.

To be used effectively and appropriately, interviews must be job-related, not include unfair or illegal employment inquiries, and be structured to maximize value and validity.

Unfortunately, interviews are frequently conducted by hiring authorities who do not have expertise in human resource practices or law. The interests of the state and employees will best be served by developing the capacity of hiring managers to conduct effective non-discriminatory interviews through training, informational resources, and just-in-time consultation. In particular, training on the interview process should be provided to hiring managers either through the employer's HR office, DOP, or other subject matter expert.

Information resources and guides to interviews, developing interview questions, the use of panel interviews, and other relevant information should be made readily available through the Internet and Intranet. Consultation for hiring managers should be available through their human resource consultant. DOP experts should be made available for consultation if needed.

A wide array of assessment tools can be applied in funneling candidates in addition to interviews. DOP can serve as an expert resource to human resource staff and hiring managers on the use of these tools.

Recommendation:

Emphasis should be placed on giving hiring authorities needed training and guidance to properly conduct interviews and other appropriate final assessment tools. A rule does not appear necessary.

10. Reference, Background, and Other Checks

Various checks can be made relevant to prospective employees, prior to an employment offer. These checks verify the integrity of information supplied by the candidate, provide a perspective on the nature of the candidate's previous employment, and provide other job relevant information.

As Shakespeare said, "Past is prologue." The best predictor of future performance is past performance. Reference checks verify employment history and may give insight on a candidate's past employment from the perspective of management staff, coworkers, subordinates, or customers. In some cases reference checks can be used as a final funneling device to differentiate between the top employment prospects.

Educational history checks verify education and the attainment of degrees. Criminal background checks provide information on past convictions that would impact a candidate's ability to perform a job. Other possible checks include licensing and credit history.

It serves the interest of the state to have an environment that enables and promotes appropriate use of reference and background checks. This includes the ability to check the personnel files of state employees in other agencies.

These help to ensure hiring of the best qualified candidates and help to protect the safety and welfare of our state's employees and residents. It is much more costly for the state to deal with the consequences of a bad hire after it is made than to take appropriate preventative steps to avoid the bad hire in the first place.

Recommendation:

State agencies and institutions should be allowed access to personnel files of state employees outside of their organization when such employees are being considered for employment.

11. Hire and Appointment – Separation and Reversion

Hiring is the process of bringing a candidate into a position. The goal should be to hire the best-qualified available candidate based on job-related criteria. As noted previously, this requires ensuring that hiring authorities have the tools, resources, and training to apply relevant options in the funneling process to final hire. It also requires that hiring authorities are held accountable for appropriate application of the process in a fair and nondiscriminatory manner.

There are different kinds of appointments that come into play depending upon the nature of the hire. These include probationary; trial service; transfer; lateral movement; demotion; and, elevation. Each are discussed below.

Probationary Appointment and Review Period

The initial appointment of an employee into state service is called a probationary appointment. The civil service law requires adoption of probationary appointments of six to twelve months by classification. Employees may be separated from service during their probationary appointment if they do not meet position requirements.

Although the DOP customer survey did not specifically ask about probationary appointments, numerous comments were volunteered on the subject. Many felt that six months is not an adequate work cycle time to determine whether someone can succeed on a longer-term basis. Employees and managers emphasize that while “best qualified” is important, what is most crucial is *actual* performance.

Recommendation – Probationary Appointment:

Option 1:

Agencies/institutions have discretion to set the probationary period anywhere from 6 to 12 months depending on the needs and circumstances of the job. If the period is initially set at less than 12 months, the organization has discretion to extend up to 12 months should the need arise.

Option 2:

Vary the probationary period per each of the four levels of an occupational category. For example, Level 1 and Level 2 might be 6 months, Level 3 at 9 months, and Level 4 at 12 months. Levels 1 – 3 could be extended for a total of 12 months.

Option 3:

Make all probationary periods 12 months, with local discretion to reduce the amount of time, but to no less than 6 months.

Option 4:

Retain 6 month probationary period for most, with agency/institution discretion to extend for a total of 12 months.

Trial Service Period

When permanent state employees are promoted (and in some other instances of voluntary employee movement) they serve a trial service period. Currently the trial service period is six months (except for campus police officers).

Input from managers about trial service periods mimicked the concerns about probationary periods with many managers suggesting a longer period to allow appropriate review.

Currently employees in trial service periods have automatic reversion rights if promoted within their current organization. Employees have rights to be placed on the reversion registers if promoted to a different organization and reverted.

Recommendation – Trial Service Appointment:

Proposed trial service review period options are the same as those listed above for probationary period review periods.

Current rules provide for automatic reversion rights of employees who promote with their current employer and fail to complete their trial service period. At this time, it is recommended that the ability to revert under these circumstances be continued.

Transfer, Lateral Movement, Demotion, and Elevation

General government defines transfer as the movement of an employee from one position to another in the same classification or to a position in a different classification with the same salary maximum level for which the employee qualifies. Higher education defines transfer as a change from one classified position to another in the same class, and lateral movement as the appointment of an employee to a position in another class which has the same salary range maximum as the employee's current classification.

Voluntary demotion is movement of an employee to a lower salaried position. Within general government, elevation is restoring an employee to a higher classification, with permanent status, which was held prior to being granted a demotion.

Both higher education and general government have rules regarding transfer and voluntary demotion. General government has a rule on elevation and higher education has rules for lateral movement. These rules provide for employee mobility and, within any limits imposed by collective bargaining agreements, administrative movement of staff by the hiring authority without the requirement of certification.

This kind of mobility meets the interests of the state given the fluid nature of work. Additionally, it gives employees further access to career mobility.

Recommendation- Transfer, Lateral Movement, Demotion, and Elevation:

Multiple avenues for employee mobility should be continued. However, the agency/institution should have the option of establishing a review period like the trial service period for these kinds of employee movements.

12. Nonpermanent Appointments

Nonpermanent appointments are used for situations where there is not a need to employ an individual on a continuing basis. Nonpermanent appointments may address workload peaks or backlogs, the absence of a permanent employee, and other short-term work needs.

Appointees into nonpermanent appointments do not normally gain permanent status in the position. Unless already a permanent employee, nonpermanent appointees often receive fewer employment benefits than permanent staff, such as insurance coverage, retirement, and leave.

Probably the most common type of nonpermanent appointment is called “temporary”. Generally speaking, such appointments are limited to nine months in any 12 month period, although there are some differences between the general government and higher education rules. Temporary appointees work on a scheduled basis, either full-time or part-time.

General government also has provisions for “emergency” appointments that may not exceed thirty calendar days, as well as a nonpermanent appointment called “intermittent”. Unlike other nonpermanent appointments, intermittents may continue for an indefinite period of time, but are limited to infrequent and unscheduled employment not to exceed a 1560-hour threshold within a 12-month period. These appointments are used to have staff available to meet unanticipated needs.

Nonpermanent appointments provide a valuable business tool for staffing to meet situations in which the employment of permanent staff would not be practical or cost effective. The Recruitment and Selection Concept Design Team felt that nine months is not a sufficient period of time to meet all nonpermanent staffing needs, and that provisions for longer periods of time should be considered.

There has been some concern from employees and employee representatives about possible misuse of nonpermanent appointments to avoid benefit costs or to fill a staffing situation that should more appropriately represent a permanent staffing situation. This can be best addressed by accountability and monitoring of use by DOP.

Student employment in higher education is another kind of nonpermanent appointment that generally falls outside of the scope of civil service rules. Student employment within higher education has a direct tie in to the educational process that should be protected.

Recommendation:

After review and discussion of the team’s proposed options, the Department of Personnel determined that the following were the most viable for further consideration:

Option 1 - Temporary appointments of up to 18 months to meet full-time nonpermanent staffing needs. No extensions would be allowed, and a 6-month break would be required before employee could return in a temporary capacity to the same agency.

Option 2 - Temporary appointments of up to 12 months to meet full-time nonpermanent staffing needs. No extensions would be allowed, and a 3-month break would be required before employee could return in a temporary capacity to the same agency.

Option 3 - Temporary appointments of up to 9 months to meet full-time nonpermanent staffing needs. An extension of up to 6 months would be allowed under special circumstances, and a 3-month break would be required before employee could return in a temporary capacity to the same agency.

Option 4 – Apply the current higher education provisions for temporary appointment, but with the general government limit of 1560 hours. This could be used for temporary appointments and current general service intermittent appointments.

In addition, all nonpermanent appointees should be notified in writing of their appointment status and the anticipated duration of their appointment. This will ensure that they have an understanding of the terms and conditions of their employment. Intermittent and emergency appointments should be incorporated within the temporary appointment rules.

13. Seasonal Employment

Seasonal employment represents those employment situations in which there is a regular and ongoing pattern of a need for staffing on a time-limited basis. This kind of employment is useful to meet staffing needs that occur on a recurrent basis, but that are limited in duration based on seasonal needs or conditions.

WAC 356-05-385 defines seasonal career employment to include two work patterns: (1) work in positions, not intermittent in nature nor exempted by statutes or the provisions of WAC 356-06-020, which is cyclic in nature and beginning at approximately the same time each year lasting for a minimum of five months and a maximum of nine months in any consecutive twelve-month period; and (2) work patterns in positions as in (1) above but lasting for only a minimum of three months each season and for the past three consecutive seasons in the same agency.

Employees matching these provisions obtain permanent career seasonal status. The employees gain certain rights pursuant to WAC 356-30-130. This includes layoff and return rights from a seasonal career RIF register. There are also rules by the Health Care Authority regarding when seasonal employees qualify for medical insurance, including during layoff. The HCA provisions do not overlay the Merit System Rule provisions.

Seasonal employment provisions can be confusing to hiring agencies and employees. Further, the current time periods do not meet business needs. For instance, in the Department of Natural Resources, seasonal employment is used to hire fire fighters. In an extended fire season, there may be a need to continue fire fighters beyond nine months. The five-month period is extremely short for judging performance, falling short of the required period now set for the probationary period at six months.

One option to seasonal layoff could be rules under which an individual who performs seasonal work for a defined period of seasonal employment each year could retain

employee status (i.e., not be laid-off), provided that the regular salary for the period of seasonal employment is prorated and paid over all 12 months of the year. Under this option, there would be no break in service and there would be no unemployment insurance, but there would be the state contribution for health insurance all 12 months.

This would be an added cost over current practice for those who work seasonal for at least 6 but not more than 9 months. However, if not already a factor in administering unemployment compensation, provision should be made to preclude eligibility for unemployment insurance if not laid-off. If a seasonal employee, for reasons other than resignation or dismissal, did not work an entire season, the separation would be a layoff. If seasonal employment was extended or the seasonal employee worked overtime, the employee would receive compensation for such work, in addition to the prorated pay established at the beginning of a season.

Recommendation:

The team suggested refining the definition of seasonal career employment to work in positions, not intermittent in nature nor exempted by statutes or the provisions of WAC 356-06-020, which is cyclic in nature and beginning at approximately the same time each year, lasting for the required six months, and less than 12 full months in any consecutive twelve-month period. Shorter cyclical needs could be met by a nonpermanent appointment.

However, the Department of Personnel has determined to defer advancing this option until further study has been conducted.

14. Cyclic Employment

Cyclic employment represents those situations in higher education institutions in which there is a regular and ongoing pattern of employment due to known, recurring periods in the annual cycle when the position is not needed.

Under the cyclic year position configuration, the employee is notified before the start of each annual cycle of their scheduled period(s) of leave without pay. Such period(s) of leave without pay does not constitute a break in service for seniority purposes and is not deducted from the employee's length of service in granting periodic increment increases, or years of service for leave accrual purposes. If additional work is required of a cyclic year employee during the regularly scheduled period of leave without pay, the temporary work is offered to the employee.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the rules regarding cyclic year employment be retained for higher education institutions as currently reflected in WAC 251-WAC 251- 17, 18, and 19, at this time.

15. Project and Special Employment Programs

General government currently uses a program designated by the Director of Personnel as "project employment," that is separately funded by a grant, or by specially targeted federal or state funds, has a specific goal, and has an end in sight. WAC 356-30-145 governs project employment in general government. There are no rules in higher education on project employment.

Project employment is established with separate reduction-in-force boundaries and appointees do gain permanent project status upon completion of a probationary period.

Special employment programs are those programs designated by the director of personnel that are designed and implemented to reduce unemployment and/or provide training opportunities to enable persons to become more employable. Special employment programs are funded in total, or in part, from sources other than the normal sources available to the employing organization.

Recommendation:

Both of these programs may be helpful in addressing special employment needs. General government and higher education rules should be consolidated to continue enabling these programs.

16. Pre-Employment Testing

Pre-employment tests are tests administered after a conditional offer of hire to ensure a person can perform the job's essential functions. These could include a physical capacity, medical, or drug tests.

It is important for hiring managers and human resource staff to be aware of pre-employment testing tools, their uses, and conditions for the use of pre-employment testing under federal and state law. DOP can serve as a resource for such information.

Recommendation:

Continue current practice. A rule does not appear necessary as existing federal and state laws will apply.

17. Orientation

Orientation is the process of familiarizing a new employee with the employee's duties, job expectations and standards, organizational policies and procedures, and work environment. Gallup research has demonstrated that an employee's understanding of performance expectations is the cornerstone to effective organizations. The process of orientation sets new employees off on the right foot.

Many state agencies have excellent orientation programs. An on-line new employment orientation program developed by General Administration has been identified as a best practice and is available as a model for other state organizations.⁵ The Michigan State Department of Civil Service has extensive information and could also serve as a model.⁶

Recommendation:

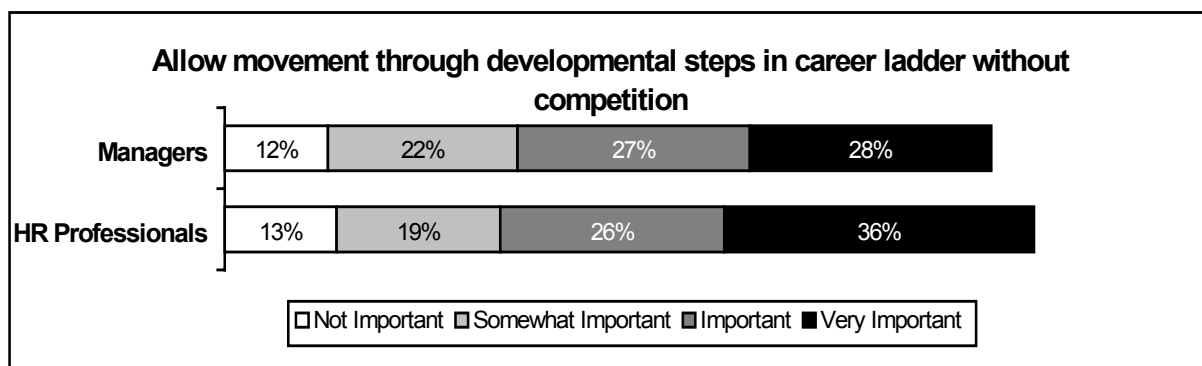
DOP should serve as a clearinghouse for resources and other best practice information concerning employee orientation.

18. Development Programs

Developmental programs serve to meet current and future recruitment needs by development of the KSA's of current staff. They may include in-training programs, apprenticeships, mentoring, developmental job assignments, tuition assistance, internships, and the state's College Recruitment Program.

As the number of highly skilled jobs continues to grow and with continued competition for qualified applicants, the state is likely to experience difficulties in finding candidates with the required capacity to fill some positions. Developmental programs can tie into staffing needs to help address this situation.⁷

In the DOP customer survey, a majority of managers and human resource staff identified the ability of employees to be moved through development steps in the career ladder without competition as an important human resource tool. Survey data is reflected in the chart below:



The current in-training process authorized in WAC 356-30-135 for general government provides a vehicle for addressing staffing needs where available candidates may not

⁵ <http://www.wa.gov/dis/bestpractices/bestpracticesorientation.htm>

⁶ http://www.michigan.gov/mdcs/0,1607,7-147-6879_15761---,00.html

⁷ An interesting upward mobility program was established in the state of Illinois in conjunction with AFSCME -- <http://www.state.il.us/cms/persnl/UMP/default.htm>. It provides assistance in covering tuition costs for advanced education in certain fields.

have all the qualifications to perform at the level desired without further development. It establishes an in-training process that allows the candidate, without competition, to move up within a class series to the desired level. This tool is useful in facilitating career change, mobility, and workforce diversity.

A centuries old development process is represented by apprenticeship, “the original four year degree”. While traditionally apprenticeship programs have focused on the trades, increasing use is being made in other fields. For instance, there is an apprenticeship program for correctional officers. The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries coordinates a statewide apprenticeship program.⁸ Labor and Industries, General Administration, Parks, and Department of Transportation either have apprentices now or are in the process of bringing them on soon.

Developmental job assignments in general government under WAC 356-39-040 and the higher education and general government rules on tuition reimbursement and internships represent further valuable resources for employee development.

Recommendation:

The need for many of these programs will be governed in part by the fluidity and flexibility that exists to develop and pay employees within the new classification and pay structure. These kinds of programs are important and recommend maintaining current rules as referenced above (in-training, college recruitment program, developmental job assignments, etc.) that facilitate development of staff and help to prepare to meet future organizational staffing needs. There appears to be opportunities to better use the concept of apprenticeship in state service and a rule may be needed to facilitate the establishment of apprenticeship positions.

19. Recruitment and Selection Management Practices

To work effectively and efficiently, the recruitment and selection process must be well managed. This includes using data to identify needs, trends, and program effectiveness and using strategic planning to proactively address recruitment needs. It must be monitored and measured to ensure high quality, equitable administration, and achievement of affirmative action goals. As noted earlier, Governing Magazine identified conducting strategic analysis of present and future human resource needs as an important best practice in recruitment and selection.

Organizations that use methods to track and monitor success rates of different recruitment methods are in the best position to achieve ongoing effectiveness and efficiency. Possible metrics would include yield ratios (e.g., ratios of leads to invites, invites to interviews, interviews to offers, and offers to hires); time to hire; and, cost to hire.

⁸ www.LNI.wa.gov/scs/apprenticeship

Assessment tools should be evaluated against actual employee performance to ensure the most suitable recruitment method is being used for the appropriate position. Assessment tools should also be evaluated to ensure there is no inappropriate bias.

Recommendation:

The continued development of a modern day human resource information system by DOP, an increased awareness of human resource staff about strategic planning and effective business processes, and an increased role of DOP in providing tools and resources for human resource business management and strategic planning are all directions to pursue to better position the state in this area.

Other Considerations

Like any other human resource practice, recruitment and selection should be linked to successful accomplishment of the organizational mission. Recruitment and selection should be a flexible and streamlined process that meets today's needs. It also should be a fair and open process that promotes fairness to employees, applicants, and the concept of merit. It should be efficient and provide good value for the taxpayer's dollar.

To effectively meet today's recruitment and selection challenges, we need to reshape our recruitment and selection strategies from a "one size fits all" regimented process to one that is position-specific and offers speed and flexibility while maintaining the principle of merit. Enabling good human resource practice and holding hiring authorities accountable for the application of good practice rather than control through inflexible rules can best accomplish this goal.

The recruitment and selection process for the state must be in a position to effectively compete for talent by being swift, efficient, and effective. To address skills and talent gaps, it must link with processes to foster development of employees within the system where necessary.

The system should present no artificial barriers to women, ethnic minorities, and other protected groups. Candidate sourcing and recruitment should include active outreach to underrepresented communities.

The process of civil service reform will require human resource staff and managers to gain and apply new knowledge and skills in the process of recruitment and selection. Some have expressed concern about a skills gap. This is an issue that needs to be addressed and will require significant training and resources. Training in multiple forms, guides, and technical assistance will be needed. With these responsibilities will come accountability to conduct these processes based on job relevant criteria in the best interest of the residents of the state and state employees.

The role of DOP in the recruitment and selection arena is subject to major change. DOP's role in processing will largely be focused on providing a modern day information technology infrastructure that will automate processing actions and provide relevant human resource information. This will free up both DOP and employer HR staff for more value added activities.

DOP should play an active role in providing tools, resources, and training to enhance the capacity of agency and institution HR staff and hiring authorities to effectively and fairly manage the recruitment and selection process. This may include such things as data to help in strategic recruitment planning and assessment, establishing master contracts that may be used by hiring agencies with vendors to provide services such as background screening, providing consultation and resources on screening tools, etc.

Lessons from other states indicate DOP will need to play a critical role in monitoring decentralized activities to ensure equitable application. Even this quasi-audit role would still be focused on outcomes versus process.

Some in general government have expressed concerns about workload increases that would be associated with decentralization. The Recruitment and Selection Concept Design Team felt that this increase will be largely addressed by decreases in workload created by simplification of regulation and effective application of technology. Further, DOP's increased role as a professional resource and decreased responsibility for administration and regulation will enable a more effective partnership in assisting institution and agency HR offices in accomplishing their service mission.

Another concern expressed was possible loss of current decentralized autonomy in higher education institutions. Nothing in the options would limit current local institution autonomy. There are new resources and technology, such as Inet App, that may offer some advantages of economy and efficiency that higher education may tap into.

Civil service reform provides Washington State government an excellent opportunity to adopt a modern and efficient recruitment and selection process, while actually improving performance with regard to hiring based on merit. Despite the numerous rules and regulations that exist, many employees continue to perceive that hiring is not based on merit. In all the employee surveys that DOP has done for agencies, the question regarding hiring on merit consistently receives the lowest positive response. An open, flexible system that is easy to understand and that bases selection on job relevant criteria offers great opportunity to improve on this perception. Focusing on outcomes versus establishing complicated and inefficient practices is a key criterion.

It is recognized that removing overly restrictive rules and processes will not necessarily solve various problems with the existing civil service recruitment and selection system. It is important to keep in the forefront the principles that provide crucial protection for employees from arbitrary and discriminatory treatment, and protections to the public to minimize patronage, promote fairness, and create a professional and stable workforce.

Recruitment and Selection Options

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Recruitment and Selection Concept Design Team

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Sandi Stewart	Department of Personnel
Laurel Uznanski	The Evergreen State College
Pam VanSpoor	Department of General Administration
Kermit Wooden	Department of Transportation
Pam Zupan	Central Washington University

Appendix 2

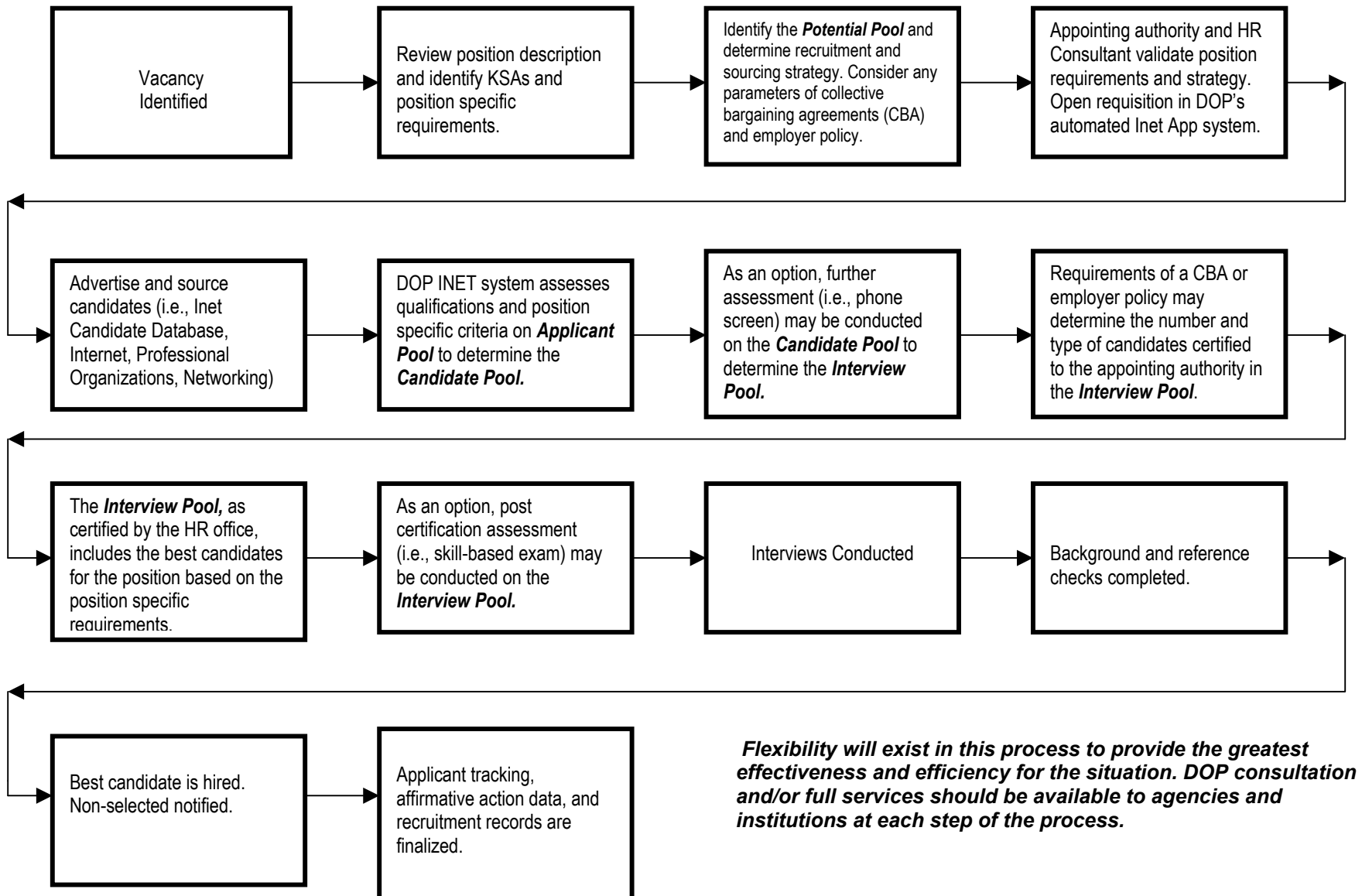
Examples of “Pools” in the Recruitment and Selection Funneling Process:

Example #1: Office Assistant	
Potential Pool:	Individuals in the workforce with an interest and the talents to perform as an Office Assistant.
Applicant Pool:	All individuals who indicate their interest in state employment by applying for the Office Assistant recruitment. Based on desirable qualifications, all applicants become a part of the Office Assistant applicant pool by completing the application and computerized assessment tool (i.e., experience and training questions, skill code declaration).
Candidate Pool:	The employer determines the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) for the position. They identify the need for someone who is bilingual Spanish, can type 40 wpm, has reception experience and is available to Spokane for the specific vacancy. These criteria are applied to the applicant pool to determine the candidate pool.
Interview Pool:	The employer determines if additional assessment is necessary to narrow the certification of names to the hiring authority. If no, the employer HR staff certifies all of the candidates and forwards them to the hiring authority. If yes, the employer HR staff conducts further screening to narrow down candidates, such as a phone screen and performance test, and then certifies the successful candidates to the hiring authority. The certification creates the interview pool.
Hire:	If appropriate, additional job related assessment (i.e., performance test, behavioral interview, writing sample, reference checks, etc.) is done after certification. The hiring manager conducts interviews and reference checks, and makes a job offer to the successful candidate.

Example #2: Architect	
Potential Pool:	Individuals in the workforce with an interest and meeting the required qualifications to be an architect. Requirements include registration as an architect in Washington State or in a state having reciprocity with Washington.
Applicant Pool:	Based on required qualifications, all applicants who are registered as Architects in Washington State or in a state having reciprocity with Washington become part of the Architect applicant pool by completing the application and computerized assessment tool (i.e., experience and training questions, skill code declaration).
Candidate Pool:	The employer determines the necessary KSA's for the position. They identify they need someone with five years of project management experience, five years of commercial design experience, supervisory experience, and is available to Olympia for the specific vacancy. These criteria are applied to the applicant pool to determine the candidate pool.
Interview Pool:	The employer determines if additional assessment is necessary. For this Architect vacancy, the employer decides to conduct a phone screen and a design portfolio review. The successful candidates identified through the phone screen and design portfolio review become the certified candidates and are given to the hiring manager for interview.
Hire:	The hiring manager conducts interviews and reference checks, and makes a job offer to the successful candidate.

Appendix 3

Washington State HR 2005 Inet App Recruitment Flow Chart



Appendix 4

Washington State HR 2005 Decentralized Recruitment Flow Chart

